

# Strengthening Chicago's Youth

## Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

**Strengthening Chicago's Youth (SCY)** is convened by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago to address the issues of violence that impact the health and safety of Chicago youth. Every day children are exposed to violence in their communities, schools and homes, and the effects of exposure to violence can last throughout a lifetime. To help ensure a healthier future for every child, we must build communities' and families' capacity and skills to raise safe, resilient, emotionally healthy youth. SCY's focus is to build capacity among our violence prevention partners, 3600+ public and private stakeholders, to connect, collaborate and mobilize around a public health approach to violence prevention—encouraging partnerships that strengthen existing efforts and benefit the children of Chicago.

**SCY encourages everyone to take action to prevent violence – here's what you can do.**

*What can policymakers do?*

*What can individuals do?*

### Sustained investment in children and youth

Make a commitment to fund programs and implement laws that will enable our young people to reach their full potential.

Parents: Establish a regular time to check in with your kids.  
Everyone: Consider becoming a tutor/mentor. Learn more about local opportunities through Tutor/Mentor Connection ([tutormentorconnection.org](http://tutormentorconnection.org)) or the Illinois Mentoring Partnership ([ilmentoring.org](http://ilmentoring.org))

### Equitable access to high quality mental health services

Ensure that resources are dedicated to allow every Illinois resident to get the mental health care they need.

Look out for our family, friends, and neighbors and encourage them to get help when you see signs of trouble.  
Learn more about the signs and symptoms of mental illness or crisis and how to help by attending a Mental Health First Aid training ([mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://mentalhealthfirstaid.org))

### Common sense approaches to gun violence prevention

Enact and enforce gun violence prevention policies that have been shown to make a difference, including anti-trafficking laws and enforcement measures and evidence-based approaches to keep guns from dangerous people.

If you must keep a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked up with a trigger lock or in a gun safe, with the ammunition locked up separately.  
Learn more or volunteer through the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence ([ichv.org](http://ichv.org))

### Juvenile justice system that reflects what we know about adolescent development

Recognize that adolescents' brains are not fully developed and adopt policies that view a child's involvement with the justice system as an opportunity for intervention to prevent further delinquent behavior.

Parents: Model good behavior and teach children how to resolve conflict appropriately.  
Everyone: Get involved in community organizing with Community Organizing and Family Issues ([cofonline.org](http://cofonline.org))

### Sustained investment in strong communities

Adopt community and economic development policies to rectify the fact that the toll of violence falls disproportionately on low-income, minority communities.

Get involved in your community—Join or start a block club, attend CAPS meetings, or volunteer at your local school.  
Get more information about block clubs at CAPS at [home.chicagopolice.org](http://home.chicagopolice.org) and about schools at [cps.edu](http://cps.edu)

